

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, February 28, 1996

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The Bay  Players

Brighton Beach Memoirs Presented One More Weekend

Who else but Neil Simon could fashion not just one, but 3, prize-winning autobiographical plays. *Brighton Beach Memoirs* was THE play that brought Simon respect beyond his established comic genius. It was awarded the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. Two years later the 2nd of the trilogy, *Biloxi Blues*, won the Tony Award, and 2 years after that *Broadway Bound* completed the growing-up saga of Eugene Morris Jerome, Simon's alter ego.

The Bay Players' current production of *Brighton Beach*, which continues this Friday and Saturday night at 8, captures all the laughter and poignancy that won the critics' hearts. It didn't take long for the opening night audience at DES auditorium to warm to the gentle musings of 15-year old Eugene Jerome of Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, as played charmingly by 15-year old Andy Lantz. As Eugene explains to the audience: "Listen, I hope you don't repeat this to anybody...What I'm telling you are my secret memoirs...It's called, 'The Unbelievable, Fantastic and Completely Private Thought of I, Eugene Morris Jerome.'" But, the secret is out, and you really should make plans to see this funny and poignant production.

It's 1937 and Eugene's crowded, lower middle-class household not only contains his father (Bob Gillet), mother (Adele Pevzner), and older brother (Matt Salloway), but also the mother's widowed sister (Dorian Greenbaum) and her 2 daughters, Nora (Caitlin McGillicuddy) and Laurie (Jocelyn Greenbaum). "If you didn't have a problem, you wouldn't live in this house," says the father—and that's no joke. Two of the characters have heart diseases, and one has asthma; 2 at least temporarily lose jobs needed to keep the family afloat. Two of the children contemplate running away from home. It is the stuff of contemporary soap opera, but Neil Simon and a superb cast keep it from becoming maudlin or cheap.

Brighton Beach Memoirs was directed by Duxbury's Michael Pevzner. The setting by Bob Gillet and others uses the elementary school stage to its best advantage, creating multiple space through suggestion. The lighting by Arthur Paquette, Molly Sjoberg and Adam Fletcher is evocative, setting the right moods and creating effective acting areas. Production stage managers Elaine Lantz and Nicole Pevzner provide the behind-the-scenes drive, and Producer Maureen Dinsmore has once again stitched together the complex weave that is theatre.

The Bay Players have a proud tradition of community theatre dating back to 1956. In *Brighton Beach* they have a winning entrée into their 30th year celebrations. It is a memoir to cherish. Reserve tickets by calling 582-1898.